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INFO RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE  
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

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SUBJECT: EMBASSY MAPUTO HOSTS RAMADAN EVENTS

REF: STATE 112013

¶1. SUMMARY: In Mozambique, with a near forty percent Muslim population, post regularly seeks to engage Muslims and this year programmed a number of events: an Iftar hosted by the Charge; a film showing and discussion followed by an Iftar at the Public Affairs building; and the donation of Ramadan gift baskets to two local Muslim institutions. End Summary.

¶2. The Charge hosted an Iftar for Mozambican Islamic community leaders and Muslim staff of the Embassy on September 26. The 24 invitees expressed appreciation for the opportunity to interact with the Embassy and to open new lines of communication with the Embassy staff.

¶3. After the call to prayer at sunset, the Charge spoke during the meal of the long-standing, close friendship between the United States and the Muslim community in Mozambique. He added that the radicalism of the few should not be allowed to define our relationship which was based on friendship and mutual respect.

¶4. Sheik Aminudin Muhammad, President of the Islamic Council of Mozambique urged attendees to fight against radicalism, and noted how the values of the United States and Islam share much in common. Commending U.S. generosity to Mozambique, Sheik Muhammad said that there was much 'Islam' in the hearts of Americans and that the Muslim community on the whole understood this. Those who did not have this view of the United States, he concluded, were simply misinformed. He welcomed the Iftar as an opportunity to further strengthen the dialog between the USG and the Muslim community, and invited the Charge to visit his school for training religious leaders located on the outskirts of Maputo.

¶5. Post then organized a spirited event October 2 at the Public Affairs building where more than 40 guests gathered for the showing of the film "Muslims" by Frontline and provided by the Department's Overseas Broadcasting Service. After the PAO's opening remarks about the political and economic successes of Muslims in the United States, a prominent Muslim contact and former Mission employee moderated a sometimes heated discussion on the film's issues in Portuguese. Although one Sheikh's comments on the "rigidness" of Islam drew discord, especially amongst the many women in the audience, the event provided the platform to debate such issues as to whether a Muslim's allegiance is first to the religion or to the nation and also women's rights within Islam. After the discussion and prayer, guests enjoyed an Iftar in the courtyard and mingled with a dozen members of the Mission staff, many of whom had never before been to an Iftar event.

¶6. Carrying on with a four-year-old tradition, Post will next week deliver gift baskets with food and blankets in the

tradition of Zakat during Ramadan to both a Muslim orphanage and a destitute inner city mosque. Enclosed in the baskets will be President Bush,s Ramadan message translated into Portuguese and a personal wish of peace from the Charge.

17. We look forward to building upon the relationships that we have fostered with the Muslim community here and to building more.  
Chapman